

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) Nagas and Mizo are among the major ethnic groups inhabiting the areas close to the Indo-Myanmar border.

(b) to (e). There is no formal agreement between the Government of India and the Government of Myanmar to facilitate interaction among the ethnic groups. However, an arrangement exists under which tribal people of both countries, who are ordinarily resident in the border areas, are allowed access across the border without passports and visas, provided they are in possession of valid permits issued by either Government. Under this arrangement access is allowed within 40 kms of either side of the border.

National Commission for SCs/STs

1507. SHRISYED SHAHABUDDIN: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes which was created by Constitutional Amendment has been constituted?

(b) if not, the reasons for the delay and the target date for its constitution;

(c) whether the post of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is being abolished; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI SITARAM KESRI): (a) to (d). The National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in accordance with amended Article 338 of the Constitution, is being constituted very shortly. The said Commission would replace the Special Officer popularly known as Commissioner for

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes appointed, at present, under Art. 338.

Eradication of Untouchability

1508. SHR DHARMABHIKSHAM: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the programmes undertaken for the eradication of untouchability; and

(b) the measures being taken to encourage inter-caste marriages and the incentives provided to them and their children in the field of education and employment?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI SITARAM KESRI): (a) and (b). Central assistance is provided to the States on a 50:50 basis for the enforcement of the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 for ensuring adequate facilities such as legal aid, setting up of special courts, incentives for promoting inter-caste marriages, etc. Educational and employment benefits available for Scheduled Castes will be applicable to those children born of inter-caste marriage who are brought up in and accepted by the Scheduled Caste community as Scheduled Castes.

Financial Assistance to Andhra Pradesh for Research and Training to Scheduled Castes

1509. SHR DHARMABHIKSHAM: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state the financial assistance provided to Government of Andhra Pradesh for implementation of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Research and Training relating to Scheduled Castes and the amount spent by the State Government during 1990-91?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI SITARAM KESRI): Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Research and Training relating to Scheduled Castes, financial